Unit 27 Council Meeting May 25, 2023 11:00a.m. – 1:00 pm

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Ruby Lingle at 11:02am. Verbal introductions were made around the table and voluntary civil rights demographics information slips were circulated around the room.

Council members present:

Alexander/Pulaski	Johnson	Massac	Union
Josie Eason	Amy Johnson	Megan Henderson	Kristen Cameron
Derek Eurales	Emily Myrick	Cheryl Vanderford	Ruby Lingle
Kelly Overhaug-Reed	Chesley Williams	James Walton	
Denna Williams			

Staff present: County Director Johnson, Monica Meyer, Tiffney Stewart, Vickie Taylor, Shannon Pulliam, John Shadowens, Destenie Sullivan, Susan Odum, Maelin Walker, Riley Reid, Karissa Cockrum.

Meeting minutes from February 23, 2023, were reviewed. Motion made by Derek Eurales and seconded by Emily Myrick to approve prior minutes. Motion carried.

Council Business

- o Illinois Open Meetings Act electronic training Ruby Lingle completed training and provided her Certificate. Monica will email the link for training to all members for training completion at their convenience.
 - O Unit Council members no change in members

Elect Officers

Current officers: President Ruby Lingle (Union Co.)

Vice- President Cheryl Vanderford (Massac Co.)
Secretary Chesley Williams (Johnson Co.)
Financial Reporter Ethyn Bradley (Johnson Co.)

- Nomination made by County Director Johnson for Ruby Lingle to remain as President.
- Nomination made by County Director Johnson for Cheryl Vanderford to remain as Vice-President.
- Nomination made by County Director Johnson's for Chesley Williams to remain as Secretary.

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- Nomination made by County Director Johnson for Ethyn Bradley to remain as Financial Reporter.
- Motion made by Derek Eurales to approve all nominations, seconded by Denna Williams. Motion carried. A brief discussion was held to acknowledge and approve Ruby Lingle signing forms to send to campus with officer designations.
- o Extension Board members Meeting announcement, agenda and invitation were made to all five county commissioner groups, but no one attended the meeting. Board membership from FY23 will remain unchanged for FY24.
 - County Extension Director Report
- Plan of Work / New issues or concerns in community County Director Johnson discussed the 5 grand challenges (Community, Economy, Environment, Food and Health) that guides the work of Extension education and programs and highlighted the work being done in Unit 27. Megan Henderson addressed the need for an agronomist in the area to assist farmers and help bring trust and relationships to federal programs.
- Budget County Director Johnson shared Unit 27's account balances as of the meeting date and general discussion showed that no concerns were raised on fiscal matters. No increases will be requested for FY24 budget.
- Civil Rights and efforts to reach underserved audiences audit was recently conducted and written report will be received in a few weeks. Accommodations and outreach continue in all programs.
- General updates (Facilities, vacancies, and other) Currently advertising for a full-time SNAP-Ed Educator; AmeriCorps VISTA, two spots filled but there are room for 8; the two continue in Egyptian and Vienna, exploring opportunities for Meridian and Cairo. MyPI Illinois coordinator is leaving in June, and we are seeking a new coordinator for the program. Grants USDA grant was not received, Innovation Center grant is awaiting a fund study, EDA Tech Hub grant is due in August, ICJIA R3 grant awarded for year 2 and 3. County Director Johnson promoted to Level III and will be presenting, with other colleagues, at the ESP National Conference in Billings, MT in September.

Massac facility is renting a storage building for Extension use, next year's lease will provide for same; Pulaski facility has no change; Union facility has no change but needs more space; Johnson facility has a new awning with no other changes; Shawnee College continues to provide free office space.

Staff performance evaluations are being completed and will be submitted to Regional office.

- Unit Reports
 - Community and Economic Development John Shadowens presented extensive

information and slideshow presentation on the Health Equity Achieved Together (HEAT) project focusing on Southern Illinois food access. For approximately the last 1.5 years John has been working to help bring a grocery store to Cairo. Sean Park, Western Illinois University, has been an integral partner and leader in helping bring the project to fruition. Thru partnerships with University of Illinois Extension, Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, Western Illinois, local 4-H clubs, Shawnee College, John A. Logan and local community members the Rise Community Market is scheduled to open on June 16. The store will be a co-op, with over 200 members to date, and governed by a seven-member Board of Directors elected by the co-op members. Currently the store if being stock and management has been hired. The store will include a café with daily options.

Other local communities continue to have no local options for food shopping. The Illinois Grocery Initiative, Deputy Governor Andy Manar and Senator Dale Fowler were advocates and huge supporters of an initiative to help solve the food desert crisis. As part of the FY24 state budget, \$20 million is being used to support solutions to this problem. This will result in a mobile pantry pilot program that will deliver a client-choice walk-through pantry that will carry up to 3,000 lbs of food and can serve 55-60 families per stop by use of a special semitrailer. This mobile option will solve Gallatin, Johnson, Pulaski, Pope, Hard and Alexander counties to help mitigate the food desert issues.

John continues working with the R3 grant in Cairo, Mounds and Harrisburg to help address ways to diminish violence and provide economic advancements to youth in these communities. Survey work has been conducted to find the strengths and assets of the youth and programs and events are underway to engage the youth in community events together.

Susan Odum provided information and details via slideshow presentation of the Create Bridges grant work, funded by Walmart. This is a pilot program centered on strengthening retail, accommodations, tourism, and entertainment industries. Objectives are to develop a unified vision for the region and provide support and training to reach this vision. Local business were surveyed and interviewed on topics such as labor force, customer base, business climate and community factors impacting their business. Based on responses and participation, many area businesses became subaward program partners and were awarded mini-grants or financial support to subsidize and reinforce their work. Regional marketing and promotion have been supported by work with Quin Colson to create Google Business Profile and uploading of 360° camera views. Quin's engagement with the business has resulted in over 145,000 views as of March 2023. Multiple YouTube videos have been created to capture web search results in opportunities and destinations in the area. Local "challenges" have been created for individuals to capture rewards by visiting and exploring places and using technology to check in.

A first ever networking event is being planned for June 15 in Anna. Anna-Jonesboro 5th graders field trip to local businesses. They learned about what businesses are around them and the importance of buying local. A group of 15 community leaders participated in an online course for Create Placemaking and are receiving awards totaling \$22,500.

Other program area activity reports and information were provided in writing along with

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upcoming programs scheduled in the Unit. Denna Williams gave information on the Operation Health Delta IRT training that is offering no-cost health and medical services at various locations from June 11-20 and provided a flyer. This allows military members to obtain onsite training by this offering as opposed to leaving the area for training.

Dates and Times of future council meetings

- September 21, 2023 @ Vienna 11am-1pm
- December 7, 2023 @ Vienna 11am-1pm
- February 22, 2024 @ Vienna 11am-1pm
- May 23, 2024 @ Vienna 11am-1pm

Motion to adjourn made by Josie Eason and seconded by Emily Myrick. No objections, the meeting adjourned at 1:30pm.

Respectfully submitted: Monica Meyer Unit 27 - Office Support Specialist For Unit 27 Unit Council secretary, Chesley Williams

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